



Creating Access For All:

Guidance for Historic Vessels

Appendix 1: Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust



Victoria Wallworth, 30 August 2018

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk



Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust

Access guide for staff and volunteers

Welcome to the DCTT Access Guide. This document aims to outline the various provisions that are in place to help every visitor enjoy their trip to Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines. If you have questions about any part of this guide or suggestions for other improvements please speak to one of the Learning & Engagement team;

Sarah Fellows sarah@dctt.org.uk

Holly Wain holly@dctt.org.uk

Rebecca Cooper-Sayer rebecca@dctt.org.uk

We want every visitor to Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines to enjoy their visit to us. For some visitors, their enjoyment of their day will be greatly improved by small changes or additions that we can make or provide for them. Wherever reasonably and practically possible, we will do our best to do what we can to make everyone's visit a great one.

We aim to provide solutions to people's needs, rather than labelling visitors with a particular condition or disability. If you feel that a visitor can benefit from using any of the solutions in this guide, please offer them to the visitor. They do not need to meet any other criteria to 'qualify' to use them. If you discover that you need more of a particular solution please let us know so that we can organise them.

Script Translations and Alternate Versions

A shortened version of the skipper's commentary is available in a selection of other languages. This includes three languages which have been identified as those spoken by our local ethnic communities.

There are also large print guides and regular print guides in English for those who might struggle to hear or see.

You can find all of these scripts behind the ticket desk. There is also a language board that you can use to identify which language will be most helpful to the visitor. You can match the coloured dots on the board (which says Welcome to Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines in many languages) to the coloured dots on all of the translation sheets.

Audio described tours

We advertise that we offer 'audio described tours' for groups that pre-book. Our tours are all accompanied by commentary as a matter of course, so when a group requests this the skipper who will be taking the boat will simply be asked to use more description language in their presentation, whilst avoiding phrases such as 'as you can see'.

Level access

Everything we offer is accessible without using steps. There is an accessible toilet on both floors, an access lift to move between floors (or the outside ramp if the lift is out of order) and a hydraulic lift on one of our trip boats (George). George usually runs on the hour, however we encourage visitors who might need to use the hydraulic lift to contact us before they visit so that they can check when it will be operating on the day of their visit.

Priority Boarding

Some visitors with sensory difficulties or for other reasons may benefit from boarding our boats first or last. This happens more often at pre-booked special events. If a customer has requested this for their visit the ticket office will be made aware, however some visitors may not let us know in advance. Where possible, we will try and accommodate requests for boarding a boat first or last, whether they have booked in advance or not.

Home Educated Families

Home educated families who book in advance with the learning team are entitled to school rates for their family. We also run workshops for groups of home educated families who book to come together on the same day. If someone is interested in this, get them to contact Sarah or Holly.

Orientation Guide

Some visitors will benefit from knowing what it will be like underground before they visit as they may not cope well with unfamiliar situations. We have created an orientation guide which can be downloaded for free from our website on the Access Statement page or

emailed to people before their visit. It contains images and simple statements about the Portal, boat trips, tunnels and caverns which will help people know what to expect when they visit.

Portal building maps

Some visitors will benefit from knowing in advance where they can find things within the building. We have produced two simple maps of the Portal which are available on our website as pdf downloads. One has text labels and the other uses the Communication in Print symbol system, which is commonly used with SEN individuals and people who are non-native English speakers.

Access Statement

An access statement page is available on our website which aims to give visitors the best summary of all of the solutions we provide to help them enjoy their visit. It can be found by clicking on the 'visit us' tab on any page of the website. Alongside some of the other information in this guide, it also includes details of noise and light levels within the Portal building for those with sensory sensitivities.

Makaton

Makaton is a language system made of signs and symbols. It is used by lots of people, including families with pre-school children and some people with learning difficulties. We use Makaton signs on our Tunnel Tots boat trips.

We also have a Makaton symbol trail for our Biffa Award exhibition gallery, which can be downloaded for free from our website, on the Access Statement page. There are a couple of examples of the trail behind the till, which you can give out to customers or just read so you know what the trail contains. If you hand out the last trail, please let Sarah or Holly know so that we can print some more.

Some of our staff and volunteers know some Makaton signs which they can use to help people understand and navigate our site. They wear a blue 'Okie' badge on their lanyards - a yellow symbol that looks like a hand doing an 'OK' sign. If you would like to learn some Makaton symbols, speak to Sarah, Holly or Becci.

Babies and small children

There is a baby changing facility available in one of the accessible toilets on the upper floor.

Pushchairs and car seat carriers cannot be taken onto the boats except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the boat skippers / towpath operations manager / senior skipper. They can be left in the Portal building during a boat trip. The shop staff will advise visitors on the day where the best place is to leave their equipment.

Pre-school children are encouraged to come with their parents or carers to Tunnel Tots which runs every Monday morning at 10am. The sessions are approximately 20 minutes long and include a boat trip into the tunnel, stories and songs, followed by colouring and 25% off in the Gongoozler.

Mothers are welcome to breastfeed in the Gongoozler or elsewhere in the building.

The Gongoozler has plastic bowls, plates, cups and cutlery which can be used by families with young children or anyone who is worried about breaking crockery or injuring themselves or others with metal cutlery.

Special rates for Carers

Carers and those they care for are entitled to concessionary rates on boat trips. This will always be the child rate. Where there is no concessionary rate for a trip, for example Halloween or Santa boat trips, there will be no other discount for carers either.

Chit Chat Club

Our Chit Chat Club is a conversation club that meets every Tuesday in the Gongoozler from 10am to 12pm. Everyone is welcome, whatever their age and whether they are alone or with friends. Currently we are offering a free hot drink to everyone who attends. A team of friendly volunteers are there each week, encouraging visitors to chat to one another. On the first Tuesday of each month there will be a guest speaker to chat to the group about a topic they are interested in or expert on.

Welcome volunteers

On busier days, we aim to provide designated 'welcome volunteers' to help visitors orientate themselves within the building. Our welcome volunteers have been given lists of questions (with answers) that visitors might usually ask, and can assist in helping them to find the toilets, boat trips, café, and anything else. They are usually located on the lower floor near to the Black Country Living Museum ticket barriers.

What's on noticeboard

Upstairs in the Portal is a noticeboard with posters highlighting the events and services that we offer. The posters are updated by the learning team - if you know of something happening that you feel should be included on the board please let us know. All of the events either take place in the tunnels or the Portal, or are outside events or services that we are taking part in.

Subtitled video in little Tess

We now have a copy of the Little Tess video with subtitles on. Those who will struggle to hear the audio commentary in the cavern can request the subtitled film to play. This must be booked in advance of their visit in the office.

Wider car parking spaces

There are a number of wider car parking spaces on our car park which are marked with yellow lines and the accessible symbol. They are near to the entrance, just the far side of the electric charging points.

Family friendly limestone trail

There are five oak posts with spinning panels based outside on site. They tell the story of the limestone cycle and the many things that it was used for. We have produced a family-friendly limestone trail, which is available to download for free from the Access Statement page of the website. It can be printed or used on a mobile phone or tablet.

The trail leads families around the posts, with challenges and activities along the way. There are some copies of the trail behind the till which you can give out to customers or just read to see what they contain. If you give out the last trail or notice you only have one or two left please let Sarah or Holly know so that we can print some more.

Safe Place Scheme

We are part of the Safe Place scheme, which runs across the Dudley borough. Similar schemes run around the country. We display safe place stickers in our entrances and basically promise to be a friendly and welcoming place to people who might need us. People with learning difficulties, some conditions such as dementia or Alzheimer's, or who are vulnerable for other reasons, may use the scheme. Safe Places aim to stop hate crime, bullying and abuse of vulnerable people by labelling places with friendly staff who are willing to help contact family or carers in time of need. All you have to do if someone shows you a safe place card is help them to call the person they need.

There is more information on the scheme included at the back of this access guide.

Accessible toilets

There are accessible toilets on the upper and lower floors of the Portal building. All have shelves above the toilet for a colostomy bag and a range of support handles and bars. Each toilet has a red cord which is connected to a panic alarm which sounds in the office upstairs as well as outside the individual toilets. It is important that these red cords are not tied up but are left to hang to the floor - this is so that if an individual falls over and cannot get up they can reach the cord to call for help.

Plans for the future

We've got lots more planned for the future to help our visitors have a great experience with us. These include more family trails and activities, and an audio guide for the exhibition gallery. We're also applying for external funding for things like dog's water bowls for assistance dogs, ear defenders and braille tape machines. If you've got any more ideas, come and talk to us!